

## Re-entry Problem

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It was announced the other day that former astronaut Donn F. Eisele is retiring from the military after 20 years of service. But instead of going to work for an aerospace firm, or into politics or into public relations for the railroads, as have other astronauts, Col. Eisele is going into the Peace Corps. "It's one of the most productive and most beneficial operations our Government has," the veteran of the Apollo 7 spaceflight remarked.

At first glance, the transition from the space program to the Peace Corps seems consistent, a symbolic linking of two major streams of American idealism and technical know-how. But there are other symbolic inferences to be drawn from the Colonel's new assignment. For that reason, and with all due respect to the sincerity of Col. Eisele's intentions, we think it would have been better if he had stayed away from the Peace Corps, and particularly from the assignment which will be his later this month — director of the Peace Corps in Thailand.

One problem the Peace Corps has faced from the very beginning has been the suspicion that its volunteers are in league with this country's military and the Central Intelligence Agency. For the Peace Corps to station retired military officers in foreign countries, even if they are retired astronauts, can only enhance such suspicions.

This is particularly so, we would imagine, in a country like Thailand, which is intimately linked to American involvement in Indochina

and the site of several bases from which American planes bomb North and South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. As a retired Air Force officer, Col. Eisele's assignment to that particular country will inevitably raise questions, in Thailand and elsewhere, about the possibility of a link between the Air Force and the Peace Corps.

In view of the potential for trouble in Col. Eisele's new assignment, it might not be a bad idea for someone in Washington to begin a little contingency planning for ways to gracefully scrub this mission.

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